

James Kirksey House
325 North Calhoun Street
Tallahassee
Leon County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-161

HABS
FLA

37-TALA,

6-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

JAMES KIRKSEY HOUSE

HABS

FLA

37-TALA

Location: 325 North Calhoun Street (lot 56, North Addition), 6 -
Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida

Present Owner
and Occupant: Miss Nettie Clara Bowen

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement
of Significance: This structure is one of the earliest known examples
of prefabricated houses to be erected in the State of
Florida.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Built for James Kirksey, 1830-1832. Acquired by Lucius Hopkins Smith, 1876. Acquired by Charles Edgar Dyke, 1877. Acquired by Newton Marion Bowen, 1885 and remains in possession of the Bowen family.
2. Date of erection: 1830-1832.
3. Architect and builder: Unknown
4. Original plans, construction etc.: No contract documents available. Structure originally consisted of two rooms each floor, separated by stair halls, with porches at each floor on three sides. Unfinished basement under right half of house.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Wing to south as kitchen and servants' room added c. 1880. Portion of north porch, first and second floor, enclosed 1922. Front portion, second floor stair hall converted to bathroom. East portion of house added prior to 1880.
6. Sources of information: Miss Nettie Clara Bowen. Tallahassee Historical Society Annual, Vol. I, 1934.

B. Historical Events Connected With Structure: This structure is unique because it was prefabricated in New England, shipped via New Orleans to St. Marks, and hauled to Tallahassee by teams of oxen.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: A two-story wood frame structure of Greek Revival style, porches at both floors on three sides. Early example of prefabrication. Only the first floor central stair hall and front room right of the

original structure were inspected.

2. Condition of Fabric: Good, although modified from original and needing repairs.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Original structure 55' (front) x 33' including porches. Faces west.
2. Foundations: Brick piers with some cement wash remaining.
3. Wall construction: Exterior wall construction wood frame, horizontal wood siding with beaded joints. Structural joints of frame: mortise and tenon, pegged.
4. Porches, stoops: Porches on three sides at both floors. Modified Doric porch columns, fluted, built-up (hollow); wood strip floor; wood latticed railing on second floor; paneled ceilings.
5. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys with cement wash, two flues each.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: West (front) entrance has typical Greek Revival trim, transom of eight lights and side lights of eight lights each. Doorway on second floor porch (west) appears to be identical.
 - b. Windows and shutters: nine over nine light double hung windows, sash mortised and tenon joints with peg fasteners, exceptionally thin muntins, vertical sliding insect screen (half of opening). Wood louvered shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable. Flush wood siding in pediments at the sides. Windows: six over six double hung with shutters in gable ends. Covering, sheet metal, standing seam.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Molded wood cornice, boxed eaves, metal gutters and downspouts.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. First floor: Stair hall flanked by one room each

side. Doorway at back of stair hall originally led to stoop. Remainder of house not inspected.

- b. Second floor: Reported to be similar to first floor with front part of hall converted to bathroom. Second floor rooms originally had two doors entering into stair hall. Each room has dressing room.
2. Stairways: Left hand wood U-stair, turned newels, round and tapered balusters, two per tread, stringboard decorated.
 3. Flooring: White pine 2" x 6".
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wall paper on plaster. Plaster cornices, concentric plaster decoration at lighting fixture in stair hall.
 5. Doorways and doors: Two vertical panel wood doors, 1-3/4" thick, joints mortised and tenoned and pegged.
 6. Trim: 14" baseboard, lacking shoe mold; door and window trim, Greek Revival.
 7. Hardware: No original hardware; existing hardware 1907. Shutter hardware appears original.
 8. Lighting: Equipped with gas lighting prior to 1860. Fixtures remain in three rooms. Modern electric.
 9. Heating: Marble fireplaces with cast iron frames and coal grates, marble hearths in first floor rooms; second floor fireplaces have wood trim, coal grates and brick hearths.

D. Site:

This structure faces west. It is enclosed by a modern wood picket fence. There are several brick walls.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves
College of Architecture
and Fine Arts
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida
February 1962